

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable medium having stored thereon computer-executable instructions for instantiating a forecasting tool for predicting future demand for quantifiable items in connection with a plurality of projects, the tool being instantiated on at least one computer in the form of a database having multiple tables, each table having information therein, the tables comprising:

a project table having project information for each project, the project information including a reference to items to be employed in connection with the project;

an item table having item information for each item referenced by the project table, the item information including a reference to an algorithm to be employed to determine a quantity of the item for a particular project; and

an algorithm table having algorithm information for each algorithm referenced by the item table,

the tables further comprising a requirements table populated by the forecasting tool on a dynamic basis with information obtained from the tables in response to a query for demand for items, the tool populating the requirements table by accepting the query, traversing the tables of the database according to the query to accumulate data necessary to populate the requirements table, and in fact populating the requirements table based on the accumulated data.

2. (Previously Presented) The medium of claim 1 wherein the quantifiable items are selected from a group consisting of parts, materials, equipment, labor, time,

and combinations thereof.

3. (Previously Presented) The medium of claim 1 wherein the database tables are distributed across several computers.

4. (Previously Presented) The medium of claim 3 wherein the forecasting tool further comprises a database server for controlling and coordinating the database.

5. (Previously Presented) The medium of claim 1 wherein the project information further includes an identification of a project-type of the project, the tables further comprising a project-type table having project-type information for each project-type referenced by the project table, the project-type information including each item to be employed in connection with the project-type.

6. (Previously Presented) The medium of claim 1 wherein the project information further includes at least one milestone date for the project, the tables further comprising a milestone table having milestone information for each milestone date referenced by the project table, the milestone information including at least one key project moment to which a need for an item for the project is referenced.

7. (Previously Presented) The medium of claim 6 wherein the item information further includes a reference to the milestone information in the milestone table and information on how to calculate a date when the item is required based on the milestone information.

8. (Previously Presented) The medium of claim 1 wherein the item information further includes an identification of at least one supplier, the tables further comprising a supplier table having supplier information for each supplier referenced by

the item table, the supplier information including the items supplied by the supplier and information for each supplied item.

9. (Previously Presented) The medium of claim 8 wherein the information for each supplied item is selected from a group consisting of item prices, lead-time necessary for supplying the item, and capacity for supplying the item.

10. (Previously Presented) The medium of claim 1 wherein the algorithm information for each algorithm is selected from a group consisting of: algorithm information that calculates a quantity of an item based on a mathematical calculation and data available from the tables of the database; algorithm information that calculates a quantity of an item based on a quantity calculated for another item; algorithm information that refers to a look-up table; and combinations thereof.

11. (Canceled)

12. (Previously Presented) The medium of claim 1 wherein the requirements table is populated with information including a project, an item for the project, and an amount of the item required for the project.

13. (Previously Presented) The medium of claim 12 wherein the requirements table is further populated with information including the date when the item is needed for the project.

14. (Previously Presented) The medium of claim 13 wherein the requirements table is further populated with information including the date when the item must be ordered to satisfy the date when the item is needed.

15. (Previously Presented) The medium of claim 12 wherein the requirements table is further populated with information including a supplier the item is to be ordered from.

16. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable medium having stored thereon computer-executable instructions for performing a method of employing a forecasting tool for predicting future demand for quantifiable items in connection with a plurality of projects, the tool having multiple tables, each table having information therein, the method comprising the tool receiving a query for demand for an item and in response to the query populating a requirements table on a dynamic basis with information from the tables, the tool accepting the query, traversing the tables of the database according to the query to accumulate data necessary to populate the requirements table and in fact populating the requirements table based on the accumulated data, the tool traversing the tables and accumulating the data comprising:

from a project table having project information for each project, the project information including a reference to items to be employed in connection with the project, determining an item needed for a project;

from an item table having item information for each item referenced by the project table, the item information including a reference to an algorithm to be employed to determine a quantity of the item for a particular project, determining an algorithm necessary to determine a quantity of the needed item;

from an algorithm table having algorithm information for each algorithm referenced by the item table, determining specifics of the necessary algorithm;

from each table as necessary, obtaining any inputs necessary for the algorithm;
and

applying the inputs to the algorithm to determine the quantity of the needed item.

17. (Previously Presented) The medium of claim 16 wherein the project

information further includes an identification of a project-type of the project, the tables further comprising a project-type table having project-type information for each project-type referenced by the project table, the project-type information including each item to be employed in connection with the project-type, the method comprising, from the project table, determining a project type of the project, the method further comprising, from the project type table, determining the item needed according to the project type of the project.

18. (Previously Presented) The medium of claim 16 wherein the project information further includes at least one milestone date for the project, the tables further comprising a milestone table having milestone information for each milestone date referenced by the project table, the milestone information including at least one key project moment to which a need for an item for the project is referenced, and wherein the item information further includes a reference to the milestone information in the milestone table and information on how to calculate a date when the item is required based on the milestone information, the method comprising:

from the items table, determining which milestone is employed to calculate the date on which the item is required;

from the milestone table, determining the date in the project table that is the actual milestone date;

from the project table, obtaining such actual milestone date; and

applying the actual milestone date to calculate the date on which the item is required.

19. (Previously Presented) The medium of claim 16 wherein the item information further includes an identification of at least one supplier, the tables further comprising a supplier table having supplier information for each supplier referenced by the item table, the supplier information including the items supplied by the supplier and

information for each supplied item, the method comprising:

from the items table, determining a supplier of the needed item;

from the supplier table, obtaining lead-time information for supplying the item; and

calculating an order date based on an item requirement date and the lead-time information.

20. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium having stored thereon computer-executable instructions for instantiating a forecasting tool for predicting future demand for quantifiable items in connection with a plurality of projects, the tool being instantiated on at least one computer in the form of a database having multiple tables, each table having information therein, the tables comprising:

a project table having project information for each project, the project information including a reference to items to be employed in connection with the project;

an item table having item information for each item referenced by the project table, the item information including a reference to an algorithm to be employed to determine a quantity of the item for a particular project; and

an algorithm table having algorithm information for each algorithm referenced by the item table,

the tables further comprising a requirements table populated by the forecasting tool on a dynamic basis with information obtained from the tables in response to a query for demand for items, the tool populating the requirements table by accepting the query, traversing the tables of the database according to the query to accumulate data necessary to populate the requirements table, and in fact populating the requirements table based on the accumulated data,

the project information further including an identification of a project-type of the project, the tables further comprising a project-type table having project-type information for each project-type referenced by the project table, the project-type

information including each item to be employed in connection with the project-type,
the project information further including at least one milestone date for the
project, the tables further comprising a milestone table having milestone information for
each milestone date referenced by the project table, the milestone information including
at least one key project moment to which a need for an item for the project is
referenced,

the item information further including a reference to the milestone information in
the milestone table and information on how to calculate a date when the item is
required based on the milestone information,

the item information further including an identification of at least one supplier, the
tables further comprising a supplier table having supplier information for each supplier
referenced by the item table, the supplier information including the items supplied by
the supplier and information for each supplied item,

the requirements table being populated with information including a project, an
item for the project, and an amount of the item required for the project,

the requirements table being further populated with information including the
date when the item is needed for the project,

the requirements table being further populated with information including the
date when the item must be ordered to satisfy the date when the item is needed;

the requirements table being further populated with information including a
supplier the item is to be ordered from.

21. (New) A computer-readable medium having stored thereon computer-executable instructions for instantiating a forecasting tool comprising:

tables for predicting future demand for quantifiable items in connection with a
plurality of projects, wherein the plurality of projects are related to installation projects in
the communications industry, the tables comprising:

a project table having project information for each project, the project

information including a reference to items to be employed in connection with the project;

an item table having item information for each item referenced by the project table, the item information including a reference to an algorithm to be employed to determine a quantity of the item for a particular project; and

an algorithm table having algorithm information for each algorithm referenced by the item table,

the tables further comprising a requirements table populated by the forecasting tool on a dynamic basis with information obtained from the tables in response to a query for demand for items, the tool populating the requirements table by accepting the query, traversing the tables of the database according to the query to accumulate data necessary to populate the requirements table, and in fact populating the requirements table based on the accumulated data,

the project information further including an identification of a project-type of the project, the tables further comprising a project-type table having project-type information for each project-type referenced by the project table, the project-type information including each item to be employed in connection with the project-type,

the project information further including at least one milestone date for the project, the tables further comprising a milestone table having milestone information for each milestone date referenced by the project table, the milestone information including at least one key project moment to which a need for an item for the project is referenced,

the item information further including a reference to the milestone information in the milestone table and information on how to calculate a date when the item is required based on the milestone information,

the item information further including an identification of at least one supplier, the tables further comprising a supplier table having supplier information for each supplier referenced by the item table, the supplier information including the items supplied by

the supplier and information for each supplied item,

the requirements table being populated with information including a project, an item for the project, and an amount of the item required for the project,

the requirements table being further populated with information including the date when the item is needed for the project,

the requirements table being further populated with information including the date when the item must be ordered to satisfy the date when the item is needed;

the requirements table being further populated with information including a supplier the item is to be ordered from.